



Congressman Vern Buchanan (F-13) & Congressman Tom Rooney (FL-16)

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Reps. Vern Buchanan (FL-13) and Tom Rooney (FL-16) called today for House passage of Buchanan's "Military Tribunals for Terrorists Act" (H.R. 4463). Two high-profile terrorists with links to al Qaeda are being processed through civilian courts instead of a military tribunal.

"Terrorists with ties to known terror organizations such as al Qaeda should be tried by military tribunals, not our civilian court system." said Buchanan, "Al Qaeda is waging a war against America. Why would we want to treat an al Qaeda terrorist like an ordinary criminal?"

"Military tribunals are better designed for these kinds of cases," continued Buchanan. "Al Qaeda members have sensitive information and contacts we need to examine. Military tribunals give us the opportunity to keep classified information safe while conducting trials. Not to mention the security costs."

The City of New York estimated that the cost for security operations would be close to \$1 billion

Rooney is an original cosponsor of the bill, which would mandate that any terrorist who attacks the United States or its people be interrogated, prosecuted and tried in military court, not civilian court.

"Dangerous terrorists who are captured trying to do harm to the U.S. or its citizens do not belong in the civilian criminal justice system," said Rooney. "The most important function of the government is to ensure the safety of our citizens. We must also make sure that our intelligence officials are protected and terrorist should not be afforded the same rights as American citizens. As a former Army JAG officer I fully believe the military tribunal system is a better venue to provide due process yet still provide protection the American people expect. This bill will go a long way to making our country a safer place."

Rooney served over four years in the U.S. Army Judicial Advocate General (JAG) Corps., taught Constitutional and Criminal Law at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and worked as an Assistant Attorney General.

The bill is cosponsored by a total of 37 House members including three leading, national security experts: the top Republican on the Select Committee on Intelligence, Rep. Pete Hoekstra (R-MI); the vice chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, Rep. Lamar Smith (R-TX); and the vice chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, Rep. Howard "Buck" McKeon (R-CA).

Alleged Terrorists slated to be tried in civilian court include Al Qaeda-trained Nigerian terrorist, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, who tried to blow up a U.S. airplane in Detroit on Christmas Day and Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the admitted mastermind behind the September 11 attacks that killed more than 3,000 people in New York City.

New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, U.S. Senators Dianne Feinstein of California , Blanche Lincoln of Arkansas, Jim Webb of Virginia and U.S. Rep. Nydia Velazquez of New York joined the growing bipartisan list of elected officials pressuring the Obama Administration to move September 11 terrorist Khalid Sheikh Mohammed's trial out of New York City and into a military commission.